Call to Ministry—A Narrative
(Revised Fall 2017)

According to the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer, "The ministers of the Church are lay persons, Bishops, Priests and Deacons" (p.855). Whether lay or ordained, we are all ministers by virtue of our Baptism. This call to ministry is emphasized in the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church: "Each Diocese shall make provision for the development and affirmation of the ministry of all baptized persons, including: (a) Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to minister in Christ's name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church and to serve in Christ's mission at all times and in all places. (b) Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to sustain their ministries through commitment to life-long Christian formation (III.1.1). For most of us this means active involvement in lay ministries. Some Christians are called to ordained ministries.

Understanding the direction of your ministry is a matter of prayerful deliberation in community. While all individuals are called to ministry, the Church calls individuals to ordained ministry through a carefully designed program of discernment. The word "call" means different things to different people. Some people identify in their life experiences a specific call; they perceive that it comes from God and asks them to reach out for a specific form of ministry, i.e., ordination. This "personal" call is often very strongly felt. While individuals may experience a call on a personal level, their call also needs to be heard by the Body of Christ. In some instances, communities see a call in certain members of their Community of Faith (COF) and they reach out to these individuals, asking them to serve in a specific function or capacity. Calls also come from the Church at large and express the needs of a particular diocese.

The discernment process is intended to explore, in community, a person's call to ministry. In some instances, the process will reaffirm persons continuing in lay ministry. In other cases, the process will affirm a person's call to lay ministry. From the perspective of the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Standing Committee (SC), the call to ordained ministry needs to be affirmed by both the individual and the Church.

At any stage in the process, the person may realize that they are not called to ordained ministry. Such a decision might display much wisdom. Conversely, at any stage in the process, permission to take the next step towards ordination may be withdrawn. This decision may initially be disappointing, but ultimately will provide a path toward more meaningful ministry as a layperson.

Throughout this process, the role of the Bishop is central and pivotal. The Bishop's responsibilities include an initial meeting with the person and his/her Priest after discernment in the Community of Faith has taken place; acceptance of Postulants and Candidates and recommendations to the Standing Committee. The Commission on Ministry oversees the discernment and formation process and makes recommendations to the Bishop at various stages.

This process adheres to the Canons of the Episcopal Church and is intended to assist a person as he/she explores a call to ministry. Ordination is **not** the only successful outcome. Rather, the

opportunity to explore one's faith and gifts can enable a person to consider new avenues for lay ministry.

Self-motivation is essential during this journey. **The responsibility rests on the individual in discernment to keep track of his/her own process and to complete any paperwork and assignments on time.** If a person has questions at any point in the process, he/she should contact their COM liaison or the chair of the Commission on Ministry.

Beginning the Discernment Process

It is the expectation that an individual begins the discernment process with the Priest who is either the Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-charge of the congregation. If the congregation has an Interim Priest, the individual who is discerning a call must wait until a Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-charge has been in place for at least six months.

Anyone who is exploring the possibility of ordination to the Priesthood or the Diaconate must be an active, confirmed, adult communicant in the Episcopal church for a minimum of one year, and canonically resident of the Diocese of Kentucky before entering the discernment process. Additionally, the person discerning for the Priesthood should have acquired a bachelor's degree or equivalent. Educational requirements for the Diaconate are handled on a case-by-case basis.

The initial process of discernment should include:

- Dedicated time of personal prayer and reflection
- The Nominee should begin reading materials on the Priesthood or Diaconate (Suggestions are in Bibliography).
- Dialogue with one's Priest about where he/she sees God is calling him/her. The COM suggests using *Listening Hearts* to guide conversations between the individual and their Priest). The conversation should include a forthright admission of any mental, physical, financial, or legal history that may be relevant or may arise during background check, or psychological and physical examination.
- The Priest should evaluate the Nominee using the following criteria:
    1) Does this person have a passionate love of God as known in Jesus Christ and is he/she living that faith and intentional about keeping baptismal covenant vows?
    2) What leadership potential does this person demonstrate?
    3) Are people drawn to him/her?
    4) Is this person articulate and trusted in the community?
    5) Does this person exercise good sexual boundaries in Christian community and what evidence do you have?
    6) With theological training, would this person be an energizing colleague for you?
    7) Based on what you know of the person's finances, is preparation for ordained ministry financially feasible, i.e., can this person attend seminary (in the case of Priests) or the School of Ministry (in the case of Deacons)?

8) Does this person have the flexibility to be placed anywhere in the Diocese as needed or are there limitations on placement?

- Begin to explore the process time line and plan on attending a discernment overnight at All Saint's Camp and Conference Center.

Lay or Ordained Ministry

A basic understanding of the differences between lay and ordained ministry and between the Diaconate and the Priesthood should be a part of the discussion between the person in discernment and their Priest.

Lay Ministers

Objective for all lay ministers:

According to the Catechism in the Book of Common Prayer, "The ministers of the Church are lay persons, Bishops, Priests and Deacons. The ministry of the lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church" (BCP, p.855). It is through ministry that the laity of the church live out their baptismal covenant.

A baptized person promises:

To continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers;
To persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;
To proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself;
To strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

The role of the Lay Minister:

The laity are the people of the church, those who have been baptized. The term "laity" is derived from the Greek word for "people." Lay ministry is exercised in the "gathered" church through the organizations of the church (e.g., Vestry, Christian education, parish programs, etc.) and in the "scattered" church as the ministry of the baptized is expressed in the home, in the marketplace, and in the places where there are opportunities to live the Christian faith. The laity is also known as the Lay Order. The various ministries of the church are complementary, not mutually exclusive or competitive.

While lay ministers carry out much of their ministry in the world—in their families, in their occupations, and in their communities, the Canons of the Episcopal Church permit a number of licensed lay ministries. The Bishop may license laity to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist or Catechist.

Within the Diocese of Kentucky, the request to license a lay minister will be made by the Priest and Vestry of the congregation or by Commission on Ministry. To be considered for a licensed ministry in a congregation, there needs to be a discernable relationship between the person and the congregation. This would include (1) regular participation in worship, (2) support of the program of the parish, (3) a manner of life appropriate to a licensed ministry, and (4) personal devotion rooted in the individual's ministry and mission in the parish.

Licensing Procedures Within the Diocese of Kentucky:

1. All licenses will normally be for a period of three (3) years. A person may be licensed for a shorter period.
2. The member of the clergy in charge of the congregation shall submit a letter to the Bishop containing the following: a. An introduction of the applicant; b. A description of the applicant's training and preparation; c. A description of the proposed ministry.
3. The Bishop may ask for verification of proficiency in the areas of canonical requirements prior to licensing. Sec. 2 (b). In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith in which the person is serving.
4. The School of Ministry may serve as a resource for training, in addition to readings, classes, and Mentoring relationships. Each license will have differing requirements, spelled out in the Appendices.

Re-Licensing Procedures:

1. A letter from the member of the clergy attesting to the ministry of the licensee and requesting renewal of the license.
2. A description of continuing training or education, which may include Diocesan-sponsored events for licensed ministers during the three-year licensing period. The renewal of a license and the completion of the requirements for re-licensing is the responsibility of the person requesting the license and of the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation. The ministry licenses already granted continue in force until time of renewal. At the time of renewal, the procedures for re-licensing should be followed.

Pastoral Leader: A Pastoral Leader is a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop. Prior to licensing, a Pastoral Leader shall be trained and found competent in the following subjects: (a) The Holy Scriptures, contents and background; (b) The Book of Common Prayer; (c) Church History; (d) The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism; (e) Parish Administration; (f) Appropriate Canons; (g) Pastoral Care; (h) “Safeguarding God’s People” and “Anti-Racism” Training.
It is expected that the Pastoral Leader would be competent in all the areas listed above to a degree appropriate to the local needs. This category of licensed ministry can be used for a lay person in charge of a congregation which does not have the opportunity to secure a resident member of the clergy. It may also be used in congregations entering a total ministry program in which a lay person functions as the administrator of a parish under the direction of a resident member of the clergy. The knowledge and training required for this licensed ministry is extensive but may vary with the local congregation. Consultation with the Bishop is necessary prior to the training of the applicant and introduction to the congregation. If the Pastoral Leader is to perform other licensed ministries, that person should be licensed for each of those ministries. This specialized ministry will be licensed by the Bishop after consultation with the person requesting the license and the resident member of the clergy in charge of the congregation

in which the Pastoral Leader will serve. The role of the Pastoral Leader in the congregation will be defined in writing by the Bishop, in collaboration with the person requesting the license and the local Priest supporting the request.

Worship Leader: A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. Prior to licensing, a Worship Leader shall be trained, examined, and found competent in the following subjects: (a) The Holy Scriptures, contents and background; (b) The Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal; (c) The conduct of public worship; (d) Use of the voice; (e) Church History; (f) The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism; (g) Appropriate Canons; (h) Safe guarding God's Children and "Anti-Racism" Training. It is expected that the Worship Leader will be competent in all the areas listed above to a degree appropriate to the local needs The knowledge and training required for this licensed ministry is extensive but may vary with the local congregation. Consultation with the Bishop is necessary prior to the training of the applicant and introduction to the congregation. If the Worship Leader is to perform other licensed ministries that person should be licensed for each of those ministries. This specialized ministry will be licensed by the Bishop after consultation with the person requesting the license and the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation in which the Worship Leader will serve. The role of the Worship Leader in the congregation will be defined in writing by the Bishop, in collaboration with the person requesting the license and the local Priest supporting the request.

Preacher: A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. Prior to licensing, the Preacher shall be trained, examined, and found competent in the following subjects: (a) The Holy Scriptures, contents and background; (b) The Book of Common Prayer and The Hymnal; (c) The conduct of public worship; (d) Use of the voice; (e) Church History; (f) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology; (g) The Church's Doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism; (h) Appropriate Canons; (j) Homiletics. Persons so licensed shall only preach in congregations upon the initiative and under the supervision of the Member of the Clergy in charge. Consultation with the Bishop must be undertaken prior to the introduction of this ministry to the congregation and the development of training for the ministry. The competencies are similar to those required for a Pastoral Leader with the addition of an understanding of homiletics. A person so licensed for this ministry may prepare and deliver sermons of their own composition when requested to do so by a member of the clergy in charge of a congregation. The Bishop may require a demonstration of competency in any of the areas mentioned by the Canon. The Bishop has the prerogative of requiring further education for a Preacher prior to licensing. The use of the licensed preacher in the congregation will be defined in writing by the Bishop, in collaboration with the person requesting the license and the Priest supporting the request. NOTE: Title III Canon 9.6 (c.2.iii) allows "godly persons who are not Clergy of this Church to address the Church on special occasions."

Eucharistic Minister: A Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister should

normally act under the training and direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. The canonical revisions of 2003 clarified the role of Eucharistic Minister in a number of significant ways, particularly in separating this ministry from that of the Eucharistic Visitor. A Eucharistic Minister may distribute either element at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist when there is not a sufficient number of ordained clergy assisting the celebrant. The Eucharistic Minister is not restricted to the distribution of the cup at the Celebration of the Eucharist. Persons selected for Eucharistic Ministry should be trained in the following areas: 1. The use and structure of the Book of Common Prayer; 2. A brief history of Eucharistic Ministry; 3. The theology of the Eucharist; 4. Practical considerations in distribution of the elements.

Eucharistic Visitor: A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the training and direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith. While this ministry dates from 1985, the particular ministerial position of Eucharistic Visitor was separated from that of Eucharistic Minister and established in its own right by the 2003 Convention. This ministry extends the Eucharistic Celebration from the church to all baptized members of the community who for reasons of health are not able to attend the Celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday or other principal feasts. This is an "extraordinary" ministry that fulfills need which members of the clergy cannot fulfill. It requires preparation with the congregation prior to the use of this ministry. Care must be exercised by the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation in the selection of Eucharistic Visitors. Those aspiring to this ministry should: 1. Participate regularly in the congregation's worship; 2. Support the program of the church; 3. Have a manner of life appropriate for such ministry; 4. Have a prayer life rooted in the individual's ministry and the mission in the parish; 5. Training and education for this ministry should include (a) Sacramental theology as appropriate for the ministry; (b) The theology of extending the Eucharistic fellowship through this ministry; (c) The method of administering the Sacrament to the sick and shut-in.

Catechist: The role of Catechist is a logical extension of the role of the church in preparing persons for baptism, confirmation, reception and the reaffirmation of baptismal vows. The Bishop should be consulted prior to the introduction of the ministry of a Catechist to a congregation or the development of an applicant's training process for this license. It is expected that the Catechist would show competencies in the areas outlined in the Canon with special emphasis on the church's teaching as established by the Creeds and the Outline of Faith, commonly called the Catechism.
In addition, it would be expected that a catechist would have knowledge and experience in methods of catechesis so that faith formation may occur in others, recognizing that such formation is a life-long process involving the heart as well as the head: coming to know God in Christ rather than only learning about God in Christ. It is important that the ability and training of the Catechist be appropriate to the age level of those with whom the Catechist is working. The Priest in charge of the congregation should observe the person in a catechizing role and be able to recognize in the person the gifts and skills to guide others in their faith formation. The modern Catechumenate can serve as an example of effective formation of catechists, and more broadly,

of ways in which catechizing which is fundamentally formational, rather than simply educational, can take place.

Evangelist: An Evangelist is a lay person who presents the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. An Evangelist assists with the community's ministry of evangelism in partnership with the Presbyter or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or as directed by the Bishop. At this time the diocese has not designated a formation program for this licensed ministry. Clergy who believe an individual is called or gifted for this ministry should contact the Bishop.

Documents Stipulating Responsibilities and Obligations:
Title III.4.1-9 Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal

Deacons

Objective for all Deacons:
A Deacon is called to make Christ and his redemptive love known by word and example to those among whom he/she lives, works, and worships; to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world; and to assist Bishops and Priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's work and sacraments.

A Deacon promises:
To be guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of his/her Bishop;
To regularly and consistently engage in study and in public and private prayer;
To look for Christ in all others, being ready to help and serve those in need;
To serve as a wholesome example, living in accordance with God's teachings;
To seek and serve the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in all things rather than personal glory.

The role of the Deacon:
The Deacon is directly accountable to the Bishop who assigns the Deacon to a congregation or other setting in consultation with the Deacon and the congregation's Priest, in accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church. The Deacon is a member of the Community of Deacons and, as such, is expected to participate in clergy meetings (as specified by the Bishop) and Deacons meeting (e.g., the annual Deacons retreat with the Bishop).

The Deacon serves at the discretion of the Priest in charge of the congregation and supports and extends the Priest's ministry in the parish, community, and Diocese. The Deacon should have a letter of agreement specifying his/her roles and responsibilities in the congregation as well as the congregation's commitment to the Deacon. This letter should be updated annually and signed by the Deacon, the Priest, the Archdeacon, and the Bishop.

Under the Priest's supervision and authority, the Deacon shares in the responsibilities of outreach by coordinating the congregation's outreach work, serving as catalyst and guide for baptized persons engaged in the outreach work of the Church, and by identifying additional possibilities for community outreach by the congregation.

The Deacon assists in the provision of pastoral care by making hospital, nursing home, and home visits, recognizing that the Priest is the primary provider of pastoral care and that lay persons may also be involved in providing pastoral care. The Deacon assists in Christian formation, appropriate sacramental ministry, and other responsibilities deemed appropriate. The Deacon also is responsible for training and supervising Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors.

The Deacon participates in the liturgy by reading the Gospel, preparing the altar for Eucharist (setting the table), bidding the Confession, introducing the Prayers of the People, assisting in the administration of the wine or bread, and dismissing the congregation. While the Priest is the primary preacher, the Deacon may preach at the discretion of the Priest.

Recognizing that the majority of Deacons are bi-vocational and are able to spend only 10 to 15 hours per week in service to the Church, Deacons may attend Vestry meetings as necessary and work with committees as assigned.

In addition to working in the congregation and community the Deacon must be willing to offer his/her time and abilities in service of the ministries of the Diocese and to assist the Priest in connecting parishioners to the broader life of the Diocese. This includes, but is not limited to, participating in Diocesan Convention, offering one's name to be placed in nomination for Diocesan positions that are open to Deacons, and serving on committees and commissions as requested by the Bishop.

Competencies:
Theological and spiritual: Skilled in the practice of theological reflection, diligent in the reading and study of Holy Scripture, diligent in public and private prayer and other spiritual disciplines, and consistent in the practice of Sabbath.

Educational: Knowledgeable in preaching and proclamation, sacramental and liturgical ministries, methods of successful lifelong Christian education and formation. The Deacon also will demonstrate knowledge of human development and communications.

Interpersonal: Capable of assisting in the provision of pastoral care, demonstrating compassion and insight into the needs of others, providing spiritual guidance, and serving as a role model in setting and observing healthy boundaries both for self and others. The Deacon will communicate effectively orally and in writing. The Deacon also will demonstrate skills in conflict mediation and resolution, social networking, and community service.

Personal Leadership/ Leadership Development: Having basic knowledge of organizational leadership, congregational group development, community organizing, and development of lay ministry and leadership. The Deacon will be capable of setting and communicating objectives and program plans and in providing individual and group supervision. The Deacon should have basic training in group processes and community organizing to assist in the management of groups of parishioners and to help lead the parish in its role in the surrounding community.

Intrapersonal: Capable of self-development and self-management, Christ-centered and spiritually grounded. The Deacon will demonstrate emotional maturity, understand and accept authority, and maintain spiritual disciplines. The Deacon should have good ego-strength and be capable of humility and personal acceptance. The Deacon also should have strong problem-solving skills and be able to adapt to changing demands and unexpected pressures.

Education and experience: In keeping with the language of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, specifically, Title III, Canon 6, Sections 1-6.

Documents Stipulating Responsibilities and Obligations:
Title III, Canons 6,7—Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church
The Ordination of a Deacon, BCP
Letter of Agreement for Deacons, Diocese of Kentucky

Priests

Objective for all Priests:
A Priest is called to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ; specifically: to nourish and care for the people in his/her charge, to preach the Good News, to declare God's forgiveness, to pronounce God's blessing, and to share in the administration of the sacraments.

A Priest promises:
To respect the pastoral direction and leadership of his/her Bishop;
To regularly and consistently engage in study and in public and private prayer;
To make known the reconciling love of Christ through preaching and the administration of the Sacraments;
To work faithfully and diligently with others to build up the family of God;
To serve as a wholesome example, living in accordance with Christ's teachings;
To rely in all things upon God's grace in Christ and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

The role of a Rector/Priest in Charge/Vicar*:
The Rector or Priest in charge is the principle pastor, chief executive and chief administrator of the parish, responsible directly to the Vestry (which he/she leads as president) and indirectly to the Bishop, in accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky. A Vicar is in charge of a mission congregation; the Bishop is the Rector of mission congregations and the Vicar is the Priest representing the Bishop.

The Rector or Priest in charge works with the Vestry and its committees on local policy matters, and, more intimately, with the Senior and Junior Wardens, the Vestry Treasurer and Vestry Clerk, who, along with the Rector, may serve as the executive committee of the Vestry. The Vicar works with the Bishop's Committee, especially the Wardens as well as the Treasurer and Clerk.

The Priest populates committees not otherwise designated to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee in the parish/mission by-laws.

The Priest challenges the congregation to recognize the needs of others and to respond to God's abundant gifts, so that its members respond with their time, abilities, and money within and beyond the congregation.
The Priest provides for Christian Formation opportunities for all ages, i.e., lifelong growth in the knowledge, service and love of God as followers of Christ

The Priest represents the congregation to the local community and the larger church. Priests are called to work "as a pastor, Priest, and teacher, together with your Bishop and fellow presbyters, and to take your share in the councils of the Church" (BCP, p. 531). This includes, but is not limited to, participating in Diocese Convention, offering one's name to be placed in nomination for such Diocesan positions as a member of Trustees and Council, the Standing Committee and the Disciplinary Board for Ecclesiastical Discipline, and serving on committees and commissions as requested by the Bishop.

The Priest is the chief liturgist of the congregation, conducting worship and preaching regularly; pastoral counselor, principally serving in situations of family crises, both joyous and grievous, as well as on occasions such as baptism and marriage.

The basic challenge of the position is to inspire parishioners to live out their baptismal covenant in a busy secular world. The Priest must remain grounded in prayer and in scripture so that he/she can nourish him/herself and others to lead active lives in Christ, involving members of all ages in the life and activity of the parish beyond attendance at worship, and using the congregation's location and heritage creatively in the surrounding community's life. The Priest must know how to use the resources of a varied and talented laity, and a Diocese that has a tradition of supporting contemporary developments such as the use of the renewed Diaconate, Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors, and mutual ministry review. The Priest must be willing to offer his/her time and abilities in service of the ministries of the Diocese and to connect parishioners to the broader life of the Diocese.

Competencies:
Theological and spiritual: Skilled in the practice of theological reflection, diligent in the reading and study of Holy Scripture, diligent in public and private prayer and other spiritual disciplines, and consistent in the practice of Sabbath.

Educational: Knowledge of preaching and proclamation, finance and administration, sacramental and liturgical ministries, methods of successful lifelong Christian education and formation. The Priest will also demonstrate knowledge of human development and communications.

Interpersonal: Capable of providing pastoral care, demonstrating compassion and insight into the needs of others, providing spiritual guidance, and serving as a role model in setting and observing healthy boundaries both for self and others. The Priest will communicate effectively orally and in writing. The Priest also will demonstrate skills in conflict mediation and resolution, social networking and community service.

Personal Leadership/ Leadership Development : Having basic knowledge of organizational leadership, congregational group development, community organizing and development of lay

ministry and leadership. The Priest will be capable of setting and communicating objectives and program plans and in providing individual and group supervision. The Priest should have training in group processes and community organizing that will enable him/her to manage groups of parishioners and to lead the parish in its role in the surrounding community. He/she should be able to exercise and accept authority, as well as to inspire trust and confidence in others.

Intrapersonal: Capable of self-development and self-management, Christ-centered and spiritually grounded. The Priest will demonstrate emotional maturity, understand and accept authority, and maintain spiritual disciplines. The Priest should have good ego-strength and be capable of humility and personal acceptance. The Priest also should have strong problem-solving skills and be able to adapt to changing demands and unexpected pressures.

Education and experience: In keeping with the language of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, specifically, Title III, Canon 3, Sections 3-4 and Canon 8, Sections 1-8.

*While it is understood that Priests function in other capacities, e.g., campus ministers, chaplains, etc., this document focuses on the most common roles of Rector, Priest-in-charge and Vicar.

Documents Stipulating Responsibilities and Obligations:
Title III, Canons 8,9—Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church
Canon 28, Canons and Charter of the Diocese of Kentucky
The Ordination of a Priest, BCP
The Ordination of a Deacon, BCP
Letter of Institution of a Minister, BCP
Celebration of New Ministry, BCP

Initial Discernment in the Community of Faith

After the individual meets with the Priest over a period of time and they agree to begin to begin the next phase of the discernment process, the Priest will form a Community of Faith (COF) discernment committee made up of 5 to 6 lay people including a convener. While the majority of committee members should come from the congregation, making sure that there is representation of the breadth of congregational demographics, **at least one person who is not a member of the congregation should be included on the COF committee.** This person may come from another Episcopal congregation (deaneries may be used in this process) or from another denomination. In the case of a small congregation, more than one member of the committee may come from another congregation or another denomination. The COF committee **may not include** members of the individual's family, close personal friends or anyone whose participation may represent a conflict of interest or the appearance of such a conflict. COF committee members should not have already formed opinions about whether or not the individual in discernment is called to ordained ministry. COF committee members **must be willing to attend ALL COF discernment sessions.** The individual in discernment is present for all sessions except the final session when the committee prepares its final report. Ideally, the committee should meet every two weeks until the process is complete.

The COF discernment committee should be made up of individuals who have a good understanding of their own ministries as well as the fact that a call to ministry does not necessarily mean a call to ordination. Members of the group should have good listening skills, good pastoral skills and a thorough understanding of the expectations, duties and responsibilities of Deacons and Priests as they are lived out in the Diocese of Kentucky and the wider Episcopal Church. They should have a clear understanding of the different orders of the church, and clarity in the differences between lay ministers, Priests and Deacons.

Prior to beginning their work, the COF committee, the individual in discernment and the Priest MUST meet with a liaison from the Commission on Ministry (COM) for an orientation on the discernment process. This orientation can be set up by contacting the chair of the COM who will appoint a liaison.

The purpose of the COF committee is to provide an environment in which the individual and committee members may freely and openly discuss the individual's call to ministry. To that end, the COF and the individual must treat all their meetings as confidential.

The discernment process used by the COF is designed to be a prayerful process of listening that is steeped in Scripture. Prayer is the central Christian practice for discovering and discerning the awareness of vocation. **All committee members should have a Book of Common Prayer and a copy of the Bible available at all sessions.** Each member of the committee is invited to fully engage in this process and to listen for God's call in each of their own lives as well as for the call in the life and stories of the individual in discernment.

See Initial Discernment in the Community of Faith for complete instructions.

At the conclusion of the COF discernment group, the committee will make one of the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that this person continue in lay ministry.
2. We recommend, without reservation, that this individual move forward in the process toward ordained ministry as a Deacon (or as a Priest).
3. We recommend, with reservations, that this individual move forward in the process toward ordained ministry as a Deacon (or as a Priest). Please indicate the reservations.

After reading the committee's final report, the Priest should indicate to the convener of the COF committee whether he/she concurs with the report. If the Priest agrees with the committee's decision, he/she should attach a statement to the report. If the Priest does not concur with the report, he/she should indicate in writing, as specifically as possible, his/her reasons. **The Priest may NOT make any changes to the committee's report.**

The COF convener and the Priest will meet with the individual in discernment to share the contents of both the COF report and recommendations and the Priest's report and recommendation. **After** this meeting has taken place, the reports should be sent to the Bishop's office **and** to the chair of the Commission on Ministry.

Nomination by the Community of Faith

If the Community of Faith evaluation and the Priest's response are positive, the individual must be formally nominated by the Vestry of his/her congregation (using Form A). The nomination must include a pledge to contribute financially to and involve itself in the person's formation process. The person who has been nominated must accept the nomination in writing (also using Form A), and send a Personal History Form (Form B), a Spiritual Autobiography (Form C) and official school transcripts to the Bishop's office.

Meeting with the Bishop

At the Bishop's discretion, he/she will meet with the Nominee and his/her Priest. As a part of the meeting with the Bishop, the following family life and self-care questions will be asked:

1. What concerns does your spouse, partner and children (if appropriate) have about this possible call? Are they supportive? Uncertain?
2. How have you and they worked out the possible difficulties that responding to such a call could bring?
3. What family of origin issues or current relationship issues might challenge or create difficulty for you?
4. Paul writes in 1Corinthians 6:19: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?" What does this verse mean for you? How do you care for your physical body?
5. How would you describe your emotional wellness? How do you deal with stress? What do you do for relaxation?
6. What is your relationship with food, money, alcohol, drugs and other substances?
7. Is there anything in your history that may be an impediment to effective ministry?

If the Bishop decides that the process should continue, the Office of the Bishop schedules a psychological exam and a background check. Form D (Release of Psychological and Medical Information) must be filled out by the Nominee and sent to the Bishop's office prior to talking the psychological exam. The Nominee must schedule a medical exam with his/her physician who will complete Form E (Medical Examination).

If acceptable results are found following the psychological, medical and background check, the Nominee is scheduled for an initial meeting with the Commission on Ministry (COM).

Meeting with the Commission on Ministry

The report from the COF discernment committee and the Nominee's Priest, along with his/her spiritual autobiography, are shared with the COM prior to the meeting. At this meeting, the Priest will accompany the Nominee. COM members will ask questions of the Nominee based on the information that has been provided in advance as well as other issues that may arise. At the conclusion of this meeting, the COM will make a recommendation to the Bishop as to whether the Nominee should be given the opportunity to have an Internship. The decision will be communicated to the Nominee by the Bishop.

Discernment Internship

The Nominee will be assigned a six-month Internship parish designed to give him/her a broader experience of the Episcopal Church. For example, Nominees from small congregations will be assigned to larger congregations. Nominees will leave their home parish during this period of time; if they are on the Vestry or any other committee, they will have to resign from these positions. Prior to beginning the Internship, all Safeguarding units required of clergy must be completed.

The Discernment Internship is a six-month in-depth experience in which a Nominee to the Diaconate is immersed in parish ministry that has been specifically selected to broaden his/her experience in the Episcopal Church. In order for the Internship to be as broad and discerning as possible, it should meet the following criteria:

(1) The Intern is expected to meet regularly (once a week, if possible) with the Mentor (an ordained person) to debrief/discuss/reflect on what was experienced. This conversation should reflect what parish life is like from an ordained person's perspective. The Intern and Mentor should complete and sign an Internship Letter of Agreement and send the document to the COM liaison.

Note: At the end of the Internship, the Mentor is to give a written evaluation to the Bishop, home parish Priest, the COM chair and the Intern. Should the Intern be invited to a Postulancy interview with the COM, the Mentor, rather than the home parish Priest, will accompany the Intern to this meeting.

(2) The Intern is expected to work with a committee made up of 5-6 lay people and to follow the COM guidelines for meetings and discernment. If the congregation has a Deacon, and the Intern is discerning a call to the Diaconate, the Deacon may be included as a part of the discernment committee at the discretion of the Priest.

(3) The Intern should lead a long-term or short-term outreach project in the case of an Intern discerning a call to the Diaconate. If the Intern is discerning a call to the Priesthood, the Intern should lead a long-term or short-term ministry project. The Intern should consider the congregation's community and needs, and the interest and passion of the congregation. The hope is that the Intern will be able to encourage the congregation to work for the Kingdom of God, and encourage awareness in the congregation. The Mentor may guide the Intern in implementation.

(4) The Intern should participate regularly in the liturgical life of the parish. The Intern should be licensed to be a Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor and should be instructed in how the parish utilizes these ministries. The Intern should be given opportunities to be a lector, to preach (at least two times), and to work with the Mentor in liturgical planning sessions. **Liturgical functions should be limited to those functions carried out by laypersons. Interns should not function in any of the liturgical roles that are the roles of a Deacon or a Priest.**

(5) The Intern should take part in the parish's pastoral visits with the oversight of the Mentor. These visits should include hospital calls, homebound calls, nursing home visitations, new member/visitor follow up and crisis calls.

(6) The Intern should attend several Vestry meetings and when appropriate serve on a sub-committee or ad-hoc committee of the Vestry.

(7) The Intern should dedicate an average of 10-12 hours a week including time for preparation, meeting with discernment committee and Mentor, travel and prayer. The Mentor and Intern may negotiate Sundays away from the parish into the length of the Internship.

(8) At the end of the Internship, the Intern will write a discernment reflection (using the "Individual Reflections" questions included in each session of this Discernment Internship document). This reflection will be given to the Mentor, the discernment committee and the COM chair. The Mentor and committee will **each** submit evaluations to the Bishop and the COM chair.

See Discernment Internship for the Diaconate document <u>or</u> Discernment Internship for the Priesthood document for complete directions.

Meeting with the Commission on Ministry for a Postulancy Interview

At the conclusion of the Discernment Internship, the committee will make one of the following recommendations:

1. We recommend that this person continue in lay ministry.
2. We recommend, without reservation, that this individual move forward in the process toward ordained ministry as a Deacon (or as a Priest).
3. We recommend, with reservations, that this individual move forward in the process toward ordained ministry as a Deacon (or as a Priest). Please indicate the reservations.

After reading the committee's final report, the Mentor should indicate to the convener of the committee whether he/she concurs with the report. If the Mentor agrees with the committee's decision, he/she should attach a statement to the report. If the Mentor does not concur with the report, he/she should indicate in writing, as specifically as possible, his/her reasons. **The Mentor may NOT make any changes to the committee's report.** Both of these documents, along with the Intern's discernment reflection, will be shared with the COM prior to the interview.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the COM will make a recommendation to the Bishop as to whether the person will be admitted to Postulancy (Form F). The Bishop considers the COM's recommendation and informs the Nominee of his/her decision. If the Nominee is admitted to postulancy, the Bishop signs the Certificate of Admission to Postulancy (Form G) and informs the Priest of the Postulant's COF, the COM, the Standing Committee and the dean of the seminary the Postulant plans to attend (if this is discernment for the Priesthood) or director of the Diocesan School of Ministry (if this is discernment for the Diaconate) of his/her decision.

After Admission to Postulancy

If the Postulant is discerning for the Priesthood, he/she will make application to seminary in consultation with the Canon to the Ordinary and with the approval of the Bishop. This diocese holds as its standard an M.Div. (Masters of Divinity) which includes an adequate concentration in Anglican studies, from an accredited seminary selected in consultation with the Bishop. The Postulant is responsible for organizing Bishop-recommended seminary visits (reimbursable expense), the seminary application process – including completion of GRE (Graduate Record Examination), acquisition of grants and loans (Diocesan funds are available and should be set aside for your formation –see Diocesan controller), moving expenses, etc. Additionally, the respective seminary's general practice for field education (in a parish) is upheld (generally 4 semesters). Additionally, a Postulant is expected to participate in one unit of CPE (generally after first year of seminary). Additional required training, regardless of where the Postulant attends seminary, includes: civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to abuse; the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV; and the Church's teaching on racism.

If the Postulant is discerning for the Diaconate, he/she will enter the Diocesan School of Ministry (if he/she is not already attending) and will complete the 2 ½ year program including one unit of Pastoral Theological Education. Additional required training includes: civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to abuse; the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV; and the Church's teaching on racism.

All Postulants will send Ember Day letters to the Bishop. It is the Bishop's expectations that letters (not emails or texts) be received in a timely manner, i.e., by the Ember Day.

Admission to Candidacy

Candidacy is a time of continued education and formation, in preparation for ordination. A Postulant for the Priesthood may apply for Candidacy following his/her seminary middle year evaluation or six months prior to anticipated ordination to the Diaconate. This application should include the Postulant's most recent transcripts, CPE evaluation, and a copy of Postulant's middle year evaluation. A Postulant for the Diaconate may apply for Candidacy upon receipt of a statement of academic progress from the director of the School of Ministry and PTE evaluation. The Application for Candidacy (Form H) must be completed and all supporting documents filed with the application (III.8.4). as well as a letter of support by the Postulant's COF (signed by two-thirds of the Vestry and by the Rector) (Form I), and approval in writing of the Standing Committee (Form K). The Standing Committee shall have interviewed the Postulant and have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, as well as a written statement from the Commission on Ministry (Form J) attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant. The chair of the COM informs the SC members of the COM's work in discernment including two previous interviews. The interview of the Postulant is intended primarily to familiarize the SC with the Postulant. Critical discernment should be limited to <u>significant</u> concerns that have surfaced since admission to Postulancy. The Bishop acts on the COM and SC recommendations and informs the Candidate, the member of the clergy exercising oversight of the Candidate's COF, the COM, the SC, and the dean of the seminary (Priesthood) of School of Ministry (Diaconate) of the decision.

After Admission to Candidacy

The Candidate for the Priesthood will complete the General Ordination Exam (GOE), an examination given annually by the Episcopal Church to all Candidates for ordination. The exams are given in January during the seminarians' senior year. The Canons of the Episcopal Church require that before ordination a Candidate for Holy Orders must be examined and show proficiency in: The Holy Scriptures, Church History including the Ecumenical Movement, Christian Theology including Missionary Theology and Missiology, Ethics and Moral Theology, Studies in Contemporary Society including racial and minority groups, Liturgics and Church Music, and Theory and Practice of Ministry. While GOEs are read and evaluated nationally by a team of clergy, and lay readers, the Bishop receives a copy of Candidate's completed and evaluated exam. There is not a magic "passing grade" upon which ordination hinges, but a deficiency in a subject may require remediation prior to ordination to the Priesthood.

The Candidates for the Diaconate will complete an examination covering the areas required by the Canons. The exams are prepared and graded by the Diocesan Board of Examining chaplains. A deficiency in any subject will require remediation prior to ordination to the Diaconate.

A minimum of 18 months must elapse from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee and ordination. The Candidate must be at least 24 years of age at the time of ordination. If more than 36 months have elapsed since the time of the psychological and medical exams and background check, they must be repeated prior to applying for ordination.

Prior to Ordination to the Diaconate

The Application for Ordination (Form L) must be submitted by the Candidate along with a letter of support from the Candidate's COF, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Candidate's sponsoring Priest (Form M) and written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Candidacy and Postulancy (Form N). The COM then makes a recommendation regarding the Candidate's ordination to the Diaconate (Form O). Candidates for ordination to the Priesthood must complete all formation requirements prior to the ordination date or within six months of ordination to the Diaconate. Candidates for ordination to the Diaconate must complete all requirements of the School of Ministry. On receipt of these documents, the SC, if a majority of all members consent, shall certify (1) that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under the Canons have been met and (2) that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination.

Ordination to the Diaconate

The Candidate shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution. In response to the realities of our diocese (numerous small rural congregations and very few parishes with multiple clergy on staff) ordination to the transitional Diaconate generally occurs in advance of seminary/formation completion. The purpose of the transitional Diaconate is to frame one's Priestly ministry in Christ's model of servant ministry. Any opportunity to shape the last

months of seminary/formation toward that model is strongly encouraged.
Between 6 to 8 months prior to graduation/possible deployment the Candidate or newly ordained Deacon should be in conversation with the Bishop about placement. The diocese will make every possible effort to place you in this diocese. In the instance that diocesan placement is not possible the Bishop may release you or give you permission to pursue opportunities outside the diocese. The expectation for those who have gone through the diocesan discernment process is that they will return to the diocese and serve at least two full years of ordained ministry. For those ordained to the Diaconate, the Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the rector of the congregation may assign the Deacon to one or more congregations or non-parochial ministries. All Deacons will have letters of agreement signed by the Deacon, rector of the assigned congregation, Archdeacon and Bishop. Letters of agreement will be renewed on an annual basis. Deacons assigned to a congregation act under the authority of the member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.

Prior to Ordination to the Priesthood

The Deacon submits an application requesting ordination to the Priesthood (Form Q). A letter of support from the Deacon's COF, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Deacon's sponsoring Priest (Form R) is submitted to the Bishop. The Bishop send to the SC written evidence of the Deacon's admission to Postulancy, Candidacy and Ordination to the Diaconate (Form S) as well as the seminary's confirmation of the Deacon's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons. The COM makes a recommendation for ordination to the Priesthood (Form T). On receipt of these items, the SC, a majority of the members consenting, shall certify that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met (Form U). After satisfactory completion of seminary or assigned formation, the GOE and any recommended remediation, and at least six months following ordination to the Diaconate, transitional Deacons may be ordained to the Priesthood.

Ordination to the Priesthood

The Deacon shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution. The Deacon must be appointed to serve in a parochial cure within the jurisdiction of this Church, or as a missionary under the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese, or as an officer of a Missionary Society recognized by the General Convention, or as a Chaplain of the Armed Services, or as a chaplain or instructor in a school, college or other seminary, or with other opportunity for the exercise of the office of a Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop prior to ordination to the Priesthood.

Reading List—The Diaconate

The Book of Common Prayer (1979) (especially Catechism, Holy Baptism and Ordination to the Diaconate).

The Book of Occasional Services (2003) (especially Renewal of Ordination Vows)

Barnett, James Monroe. (1995). *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order, rev. ed.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1954). *Life Together.* New York: Harper and Row.

Collins, John N. (2002). *Deacons and the Church: Making Connections Between Old and New.* Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Donovan, Mary Sudman. (1986). *A Different Call: Women's Ministries in the Episcopal Church 1850-1920.* Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow.

Epting, Susanne Watson. (2015). *Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed.* New York: Morehouse Publishing.

Hall, Christine, ed. (1991). *The Deacon's Ministry.* Herefordshire, Great Britain: Gracewing.

Plater, Ormonde. (2009). *Deacons in the Liturgy, 2nd ed.* Harrisburg, PA: Church Publishing.

*Plater, Ormonde. (2004). *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons, rev. ed.* Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications.

Diakoneo, Newsletter of the Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) (formerly, the North American Association for the Diaconate). One of the membership benefits of AED, an organization open to Deacons, Priests, Bishops, Deacons in formation, those interested in becoming Deacons, and interested laypersons.

AED website: www.episcopalDeacons

Reading List – The Priesthood

The Book of Common Prayer (1979) (especially Catechism, Holy Baptism, Ordination to the Diaconate and Ordination to the Priesthood).

The Book of Occasional Services (2003) (especially Renewal of Ordination Vows)

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1954). *Life Together.* New York: Harper and Row.

Countryman, L. William (1999). *Living on the Border of the Holy: Renewing the Priesthood of All.* Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing.

Cox, R. David. (2003). *Priesthood in a New Millennium: Toward an Understanding of Anglican Presbyterate in the Twenty-First Century.* New York, NY: Church Publishing.

Fairless, Caroline S. (2001). *Confessions of a Fake Priest.* New York, NY: Church Publishing.

Geitz, Elizabeth Rankin (2007). *Calling Clergy: A Spiritual and Practical Guide Through the Search Process.* New York, NY: Church Publishing.

Portaro, Sam (2008). *Transforming Vocation.* New York, NY: Church Publishing.

Ross, Maggie (1992, & 2007). *Pillars of Flame: Power, Priesthood, and Spiritual Maturity.* New York, NY: Seabury Books.